

## Alfred University given state approval for new degrees in data analytics, business analytics

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ALFRED, NY – The New York State Department of Education has notified Alfred University that it has approved two new degrees programs in analytics. Beginning this fall, the University will offer new Bachelor of Science degree programs in data analytics and business analytics, preparing students for careers in the world's fastest growing fields.

“These new offerings will provide students with the opportunity to combine analytics with the rich selection of other courses offered at Alfred University,” said Mark Lewis, dean of the Alfred University College of Business. “Our strong alumni and employer networks will provide opportunities for impactful internships, applied experiences and careers after graduation.”

Currently, the University offers a minor in data analytics. “The College of Business has always offered two courses in analytics that all our students took, but now we have the approval to deliver a full analytics curriculum,” Lewis commented.

Both programs will be housed in the University's College of Business. The bachelor's degree in business analytics is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The degree in data analytics is interdisciplinary in nature.

Data and business analysts are in increasingly high demand. With applications across a wide spectrum of industries and organizations—from government and education to healthcare and business—careers as an analyst are plentiful.

“Both fields are rapidly growing due to the exponential volume of data that is being collected especially through the internet of things,” said Shelly Freyn, professor of marketing at Alfred University. The “internet of things” is a concept describing a network of Internet-connected objects and devices that collect and exchange data. “According to the (federal) Bureau of Labor Statistics, business analysts and data analysts are both predicted to grow well over 10 percent faster than most other careers. Glass Door estimates entry levels in both these fields at over \$60,000 due to the high demand.”

“As the world is more data-driven and the quantity of data being collected is growing exponentially, the jobs in data and business analytics are also growing exponentially,” Lewis said. “We hear from employer after employer that they are unable to find enough qualified people to fill their jobs. Alfred University is now in a position to prepare our students to move into these careers.”

Business analytics is a field that drives practical, data-driven changes in a business. It focuses on providing actionable recommendations that can be applied to an entire business, or to a specific project, process or product. Business analysts study data to help ensure efficiency in business operations, determine where a business stands in the marketplace, and help a business develop an effective marketing strategy.

Among the many careers a business analytics career can lead to are business analyst (strategic planning), financial analyst (trading strategies and the stock market), market research analyst (new product and market trends; social media analytics); and operations research analyst (streamlining/productivity).

Lewis explained that business analytics majors will take the same core courses as our accounting, business administration, health planning and management and marketing students take, plus a set of specialized analytics courses and a practicum.

Data analytics is the science of analyzing raw data and making conclusions about that information. Analyses are used to optimize processes to increase the overall efficiency of a business or system. Data analytics can be applied to businesses, but also to industries outside of business: education, government, geospatial, engineering, environmental sciences, and medical/healthcare, for example.

“With big data and the internet of things, analytics are used well beyond the business community. The government sector can use real time data for improved decision-making; for example, data analytics can save billions per year in reducing inefficiencies, improving productivity and eliminating security threats,” Freyn explained. “Other applications include supporting healthcare, the agricultural industry, education and public transportation systems. Agencies also use data for weather forecasting, national security risks, crime detection and cybersecurity.”

Some of the careers paths for data analysts include data analytics consultant, data communications analyst; computer security analyst, climatologist, criminologist, healthcare data analyst; operations research analyst, and machine learning analyst.

Data analytics majors will have the same analytics courses as business analytics majors. They will choose from a variety of specialized courses in areas such as art, biology, computer science, environmental science, geology, mathematics, but not the core business courses.

Lewis said the University is adding two new College of Business faculty positions in analytics over the next two years. One new faculty member has been appointed and will begin teaching analytics this fall; the other will begin in the fall of 2021. Other faculty with analytics backgrounds will also provide instruction. The University will also appoint a new computer science professor who also teach required courses for the analytics majors.